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AN EXPERIMENT IN SOCIALIZATION

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Whoever remarked that progress in human affairs comes because we are shocked into it uttered a word of wisdom. Perhaps no one ever said it, but it is worth saying. The following came as a distinct shock to the faculty of the Everett High School. As the result of the study¹ of the scholarship records for five years ending in June, 1915, we found that of a total of 28,087 pupil-subject schedules 22,381 resulted in earned credits, while 2,185 were failures, 3,088 were drop-outs, and 433 were incompletes. In percentages, 79.68 per cent of all pupil-subject schedules resulted in earned credits, 7.77 per cent were failures, 10.99 per cent were drop-outs, and 1.54 per cent were incompletes. To discover that more than one-fifth of all the work undertaken resulted in failures, drop-outs, and incompletes was disconcerting enough, but the further revelation that the heavy mortality invariably occurred in the first year brought the sharp realization that vigorous and drastic reorganization in order to modernize and socialize the entire range of high-school activity was essential and highly justifiable.

This paper details the reaction of the faculty to the shock which we received. The ideals upon which the socializing of the work has been founded are to adapt the training offered in the school to meet every purposeful community demand, to utilize every available community resource, to provide adequate preparation for every boy and girl of high-school age in the community excepting the mentally and morally unfit, and to arouse the community sentiment that the proper scope of the school covers in a vitally helpful way every relation and interest of the pupils' lives.

¹"The Problem of Failures and Dropouts in High School Work," *American School*, November, 1916.

I

The proper socialization of any high school is in large part a local matter. Here is detailed the effort in one community to solve its problem. The city of Everett is a commercial and industrial port; its arm of labor is a body of 35,000 independent, self-respecting, home-owning white laborers—Americans, Scandinavians, Germans, Irish, and Canadians. Their dominant beliefs are religion and education, as over fifty churches, two Scandinavian schools, a parochial high school, and a public high school of 1,100 students attest. With no hampering traditions, Everett is a city in the making, for it has been hewn from the forest in less than thirty years. Substantial prosperity is founded upon the products of the forests and the sea—lumber, shingles, paper, salmon and other sea foods—and upon the dependent industries of iron and steel, logging and railroading, while many go down to the sea in ships.

Such is the community; to meet its broader educational needs constitutes its high-school problem.

II

Twice each year proud parents and fond friends gather at the Eighth-Grade Central School to witness the closing exercises and presentation of common-school certificates to their precise, self-possessed, and altogether adorable daughters and to their somewhat awkward, self-conscious, and much less dignified sons. To these graduates three paths appear: the first leads to business college, and a few follow it into office work; the second leads to industry and other work, and a few follow it, mostly into blind-alley jobs; the third leads to the high school, and many there are who enter in; no greater happiness has awaited them there, for through investigation we discovered that before the close of the first year in high school more than one in four has failed and dropped out. This startling revelation accelerated the movement toward closer adaptation of the high-school work to individual and community needs and the organization of many social agencies designed to interest and hold in school the ill-adjusted and unsocial adolescent youth—all of which constitutes the attempt at the socialization of the high school.

III

There are four approaches to the problem of socialization: through organization, through the course of study, through supervision and administration, and through the so-called outside activities. The first of these is organization, and by it the type, form, and spirit of the school are largely determined. The segregation of the boys and girls into separate classes for recitation purposes through the first two years and in the science work permits wider and freer discussion and allows radical differentiation of subject-matter to meet the special needs of boys and girls. The longer school day affords lesson preparation as well as lesson recitation under the guidance of the teacher and under proper study conditions.¹ It is a matter of conscious effort to create within the student body the sense of self-direction and self-responsibility for good order in the classroom, in the cafeteria, and in the halls. In the building up of the faculty itself teachers are chosen for their social outlook and their ability to find a place in the extra-classroom activities of the school as well as for their record in scholarship and their technical expertness.

Thus through organization some of the very fundamental bases of socialization are sought and in a measure achieved.

IV

The course of study has been planned to conserve the best and most essential parts of the great masses of human knowledge, traditional to be sure, but nevertheless our heritage of culture from the past, and at the same time to offer the newer subjects which careful consideration apparently proves to be helpful and worth while. Three years of English, including one semester of American literature and one year of advanced American history and civics, are the only subjects required of all candidates for graduation. The courses offered are classed under four heads: college-entrance, elective, commercial, and vocational. The four college-entrance courses are framed to meet fully the group requirements of the state university, the four major lines of work being Latin, history, science, and modern language. The elective courses are the general

¹ "Supervised Study in the Everett High School," *School Review*, December, 1916.

and the literary, half of the former being freely elective. Mathematics may be deferred but must be taken, and a major consisting of six semesters of work in the department of greatest interest is required. In the latter there is no mathematics requirement, but prescriptions along other lines are somewhat more pronounced, three years of foreign language, two years of descriptive science, and two years of history being necessary. Two commercial courses lead on the one side to thorough drill during the last two years in bookkeeping, and on the other to a solid grounding in stenography and typewriting. Penmanship, commercial arithmetic, rapid drill and spelling, and commercial English are required before the work in bookkeeping and stenography is begun, and half the work in these commercial courses is in other departments. A two-year course is offered, however, for those who cannot remain four years in school, which includes practically all of the commercial work, but which receives no school recognition when completed.

A regulation manual-training course is offered covering four years of work, with a major in cabinet, forge, and foundry, machine practice, or electrical construction. Two- and three-year trade courses are provided for boys who are not especially interested in graduation from high school.

A substantial home-economics course, with no definitely required mathematics, but with carefully worked-out courses in the chemistry of the home, physiology, health, hygiene and sanitation, millinery and dressmaking, dietetics, home nursing, and care of children and the sick, provides the corresponding work for the girls. This work is all presented in such a way that all girls scheduled in other courses may take some of it if they desire.

As the demand has made itself felt the curriculum has been broadened and enriched, until the following range of work has been provided: five years of English, including a year of college English; four years of mathematics, of which college algebra and trigonometry are a part; four years of history, the high light of which is a year of modern problems, the great world-movements since 1870; in science, first-year science, biology, botany (three semesters), physics, chemistry, both regular and for the home, physiology, health, and hygiene are taught; Latin and German, four years

each, with two years each of Spanish, French, and Norse, and with Swedish making a bid for recognition comprise the foreign-language work; the commercial work covers penmanship, commercial arithmetic, rapid drill and spelling, commercial English and business forms, commercial law, economics, bookkeeping, shorthand, type-writing, and office practice; the work offered in manual training comprises shop, cabinet, forge, foundry, and pattern-making, elementary and advanced machine-shop, electricity, mechanical, architectural, and machine drawing, with special trade and prevocational adaptations; in home economics, besides the special courses mentioned above, the usual courses in sewing and cooking are offered; and free electives not required in any course are art and design, lettering and cartooning, public speaking, and reviews of the common branches. Outside music and Bible-study may under prescribed conditions be accepted toward graduation.

Special adaptations have been worked out in these respects: no one may open a set of books until he can write and is efficient in commercial arithmetic; no one may schedule for stenography until he can write, spell, and is proficient in business English and letter-writing; upon recommendation of the faculty of the Eighth-Grade Central School about 20 per cent of each incoming class is scheduled into second-semester English because of a strong record in the grades; likewise those who have taken elementary Latin at Central go directly into second-semester Latin; and without restriction a student may carry a half-credit of work extra in most vocational and in a considerable part of the commercial work, but no one without a C record or better may schedule for five full subjects.

This statement of the quantity and the range of the work offered indicates the attempt to provide for the individual needs of every student, and there is a standing offer that when twenty students ask for instruction in any legitimate subject an effort will be made to furnish such instruction.

The third avenue to socialization is through supervision and administration. The cardinal principle of that supervision is that every teacher is encouraged to be independent in meeting his classroom problems. With sufficient direction and detail to co-ordinate the progress of various sections of the same work, the teacher is

left to put his individuality deep into the heart of his problem and work out his own success. It is a conscious school ideal that each teacher be wise and expert enough to meet his particular problems better than his superintendent or his principal can tell him how to meet them.

As a faculty we hold that concept of ethical and moral values which has been phrased in a thousand ways and summed up in pithy slang, "Example has the edge on precept." It is recognized that any ill-prepared lesson plan, any carelessly conducted recitation, any revelation to a keenly observant class of needless ignorance or thoughtless error, is immoral as the suggestion to steal or the invitation to lie is immoral. Every earnest effort, every evidence of forethought, every successful recitation founded upon thoughtful preparation and evident, outspoken sincerity is a moral and uplifting force in the life of every student. In the presence of such example the lines of precept may be graven deep.

Three means of keeping alive professional interest are constantly available—the professional library, the men's club, and the faculty meetings. The first is the joint possession of all the teachers of the city; it numbers four hundred volumes and receives several periodicals and magazines. It is supported by the voluntary contributions of books and money of all the teachers and is conveniently located for frequent consultation. Notable new books and magazine articles are quickly provided, and its influence is widespread.

The men's club is an organization of all the men in the city system which meets once each month during the school year for a dinner, a paper, and a general discussion. Since the rules of discussion are that anyone is at liberty to speak out the things that struggle for utterance, nothing so uttered can be considered personal, and no arrests may be made after a meeting for opinions expressed therein; this discussion takes a wide and at times a rampant range.

Without question the greatest integrating force is the monthly high-school faculty meeting. Despite the public statement of a prominent educator that high-school faculty meetings are for the most part a failure, our experience year after year has been precisely the opposite. The plan of organization of the meetings for the

year provides that every member of the faculty shall appear once. At a meeting of the heads of the departments at the beginning of each school year the first general meeting is planned with the principal as leader and the heads of departments as helpers. A general topic is chosen and each head is assigned a subtopic to present and discuss. Lots are drawn to determine in which each head of department shall take charge of the meeting, and all the members of the faculty are chosen by the various heads to assist in choosing, developing, and presenting some topic. These topics vary from psychological and educational problems to the most concrete of our everyday troubles and experiences, and discussion of them is free and unrestricted. It is the aim to secure adequate explanation and discussion of every change in high-school policy of any importance in order to adjust wide differences of opinion among the faculty and to work out a thoroughly understood and approved program.

The fourth avenue toward socialization is through the various organizations of the school. Credit toward graduation is given for the satisfactory performance of a specified amount of work in music, gymnasium, including athletics, debate, declamation, dramatics, editorial work, and reporting. One-sixteenth of the requirements for graduation may thus be met. The chief value of giving the credit lies in the fact that it gives to the work certain standards and standing and puts all of it definitely under school direction and control.

A thoroughly successful superintendent of the old type used to say often that when the literary society came into the school at the door scholarship went out at the window. Upon that basis the benign shades of academic excellence have ceased to fall upon us, for we have, all told, about thirty distinct and more or less closely organized groups, clubs, and societies.

We believe that we recognize certain definite values in the work of these organizations: they provide a testing laboratory and apparatus for classroom information and instruction; they furnish an experimental field where the fledglings may try their wings, and no great harm done if they fail; here the school makes its chief effort to attain in the students muscular, vocal, mental, nervous, and moral control; here the experiments in group living, concerted

action, and social adjustment are carried out; in these organizations conditions are reproduced in miniature into which the students must go and in which they must find their place; and it is here that the interests, ambitions, and energies of the students come first into organized common touch.

The musical organizations number eight, the general chorus of two hundred and fifty, the Boys' Glee Club, the Girls' Advanced Glee Club, the Girls' Intermediate Glee Club, the Girls' Beginning Glee Club, the Double Mixed Quartet, the Boys' Quartet, and the orchestra.

These organizations are in constant demand, furnishing the musical numbers for numerous programs both in and out of the school, leading the assembly singing, and presenting at frequent intervals musical evenings—this year a series of four national evenings based upon the songs, melodies, and stories of Ireland, Scotland, England, and France.

The High-School Athletic Association conducts the athletic affairs of the school with the assistance of the faculty athletic director. The football squad numbers sixty each year. Forty boys turn out for the first basket squad, and over one hundred others find a place on some class, club, or church team, and a long series of games is played through. A track squad of thirty and a baseball squad of as many more are out for the spring athletics. The "Big E" Club is made up of those who have won their letters in inter-high-school athletics and constitute a very important social, athletic, and moral force within the student body.

Philomathia is a flourishing literary and debating society, which holds regular weekly afternoon meetings and a series of open meetings throughout the year. A team is always entered in the state debates. A series of class and interclass debates and a series of class declamatory recitals culminate in the school championship gold-medal debates and declamatory contests which are held each March as a part of the annual programs. In these programs two hundred students have a part in two evenings of music, debate, declamation, the junior farce, the college-year stunt, and the gymnasium exhibit and folk-dances. The annual senior class play follows in April and closes the active literary work of the year.

The foreign-language department maintains three active and influential clubs: Die Deutsche Gesellschaft, the Spanish Club, and the French Club, while the advanced Latin students entertain at a party each year the beginners in Latin. The German Club has presented several German plays, and all the clubs hold literary and social meetings.

The science department maintains a Science Club, a Camera Club, a Wireless Club—once flourishing, now by order of the War Department in eclipse—a Botany Club, and the trade boys have their Electrical Club.

Two publications are issued: the *Nesika*, the Senior Annual and Review, and the *Kodak*, a weekly newspaper. The staffs of the *Kodak* and *Nesika* are made up from the membership of the High-School Press Club.

Spatterinc is a flourishing short-story club, and Tsitra is a sketch and art club, each of which attracts a special group and offers opportunity for individual talent.

An idea, borrowed from Morris High School, New York, has led to the formation of an honor High-School Service League founded upon the ideal of service to the school and community. Membership is conditioned upon active service, good scholarship, and satisfactory conduct, and is open to Juniors, Seniors, and college-year students. It is just that substantial recognition be extended to that group of the advanced students who have been ready at all times throughout their high-school career to co-operate in every helpful way.

Triangle, the mathematics club, and Sphinx, the history club, complete the list of active clubs and contribute an important educational and social opportunity to students interested in their particular field.

Two groups are now named which are based upon scholarship. Four times each year the high-scholarship list is prepared and published. It contains the names of all who have averaged ninety in their work for the quarter preceding, and before each commencement the honor roll is prepared and announced. This roll contains the names of those who have maintained an average record of ninety throughout their four years in high school. From this roll

commencement speakers are chosen. Between 15 and 20 per cent of the membership of the school are now named in the high-scholarship roll each quarter, and about 20 per cent of the Seniors reach the honor roll.

Shot through the whole extra-classroom organization is the social motive. Technical training is the first object of most of the clubs, but the opportunity for social experience is ever a close second. To each class, club, and society is accorded the privilege of one or two parties each year, several of which start at six or six-thirty with "eats," after which a program of "stunts," music, and games is carried on until nine or nine-thirty, when the party breaks up. In the spring numerous beach parties and picnics are held by the smaller groups, and a limited number of all-high-school dances are held throughout the year in the gymnasium, invitations to which are limited to members of the school and faculty.

Owing to the long school day and the resulting lesson preparation at school there is little objection to opening the building at night from the standpoint of interference with study. Hence on several evenings of each week throughout the winter months various groups hold their regular meetings with a social hour following, and many basket-ball games, a series of four declamatory recitals, from four to eight debates, numerous club programs and parties, and musical evenings are held.

Thus the school, through organization, through supervision and administration, through the curriculum, and through the various social agencies within the school, is attempting to assist its students in meeting and solving the multitude of physical, mental, moral, and social problems which confront them. How well it is succeeding the Everett citizenship of tomorrow alone will prove.